

13.3P
A
DISSERTATION

ON

ST. JOHN, iii. 5.

In which, from ARGUMENTS intirely New,

Is fully made appear

From the NEW TESTAMENT,

That by the Word SPIRIT, is meant the WORD OF
GOD; and therefore by being BORN OF THE SPIRIT,
our LORD intended being BORN OF THE WORD OF
GOD:

LIKEWISE

That BAPTISM, as instituted in the NEW TESTAMENT,
is the only Initiating Right into the KINGDOM OF
GOD, i. e. the NEW COVENANT.

Search the Scriptures.

Whatsoever was written aforetime, was written for our Learning.

By **W. ASHDOWNE.** *K*

CANTERBURY:

Printer for the AUTHOR, and Sold by SIMMONS and
KIRBY, and Mr. SMYTH, in Canterbury; J. WILKIE,
in St. Paul's Church-yard, London. MDCCLXVIII.

DISSEMINATION

ET ALIA

IN THE

NEW

OF THE

OF THE



BY

CANTERBURY

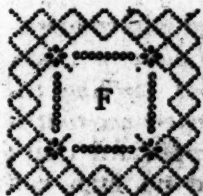
Printed for the

DISSERTATION

ON

ST. JOHN, iii. 5.

Jesus answered, verily, verily, I say unto thee; except a man be born of Water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.



FIRST, from the New Testament it seems plain, that when these words were spoken, the Jews expected the Messiah to come, i. e. as a temporal Prince to reign over them.

Secondly, it is highly probable not only that Nicodemus looked for the Messiah, but also, that he had the like opinion of him.

Thirdly, I suppose Nicodemus did not apprehend that any other indispensable conditions would be proposed by the Messiah, to enter into his Kingdom, and become his subjects, than are required in the Law of Moses.

Fourthly, it is very probable, that Nicodemus, prepossessed with this opinion of the Messiah, said unto him, — *Rabbi, we know thou art a Teacher come from God; i. e. thou art the King of Israel, whom we Jews expect to come, and reign over us, on the throne of David.*

Fifthly, to this opinion of Nicodemus, our Lord replies, when he answered, *verily, verily, I say unto thee, (thou hast not a right judgment of my character, neither dost thou understand what are the indispensable conditions which are required of every one to become a subject of the Kingdom of Heaven; for I tell thee,) that except a man, (i. e. even a circumcised Jew) be born again, he cannot see (i. e. enter into, as verse 4.) the Kingdom of God; (i. e. not that Kingdom which you Jews expect now to be set up by the Messiah, but*

that which I am come to establish.) Nicodemus, surprized at our Lord's words, replies,—*How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?* [again.] Such a birth I cannot conceive you intend; and I am wholly ignorant of any such thing being an indispensable condition of entering into the Kingdom of the Messiah, which we look for.

Our Lord, to illustrate what he had said, adds,—*Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water, [baptism] and the spirit, [i. e. the Word of God] he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God, i. e. the New Covenant.*

Sixthly, But you Jews as yet have been born of the flesh only: but I assure you, this natural birth doth not give you a right or privilege to enter into that kingdom. That right or privilege belongs to those only, who are born of the spirit; for *that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit.* These are the only seed or children of Abraham, who will be admitted into the Kingdom of God. And therefore Nicodemus, while a meer Jew, has no other right to enter therein,—*Marvel not that I said, and repeat it, ye must be born again,* this new birth being an indispensable condition to enter into the Kingdom of God.

Our Lord, farther to illustrate what he had said concerning being born of the Spirit, adds, *The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof; but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.* Which words may be paraphrased thus; The wind is a thing altogether invisible, and no man can behold its motion, even when it blows with the greatest violence; yet that there is such a thing is evident enough, and the effects of it are sufficiently known. Thus, therefore, that regeneration or renewal of the heart and manners, which is worked in a man by the efficacy of the Gospel, though in itself it be invisible, and not at all discerned by sense, yet in its effects it is a very great and plain thing; and really as manifest and considerable to all the purposes of a spiritual life, as the birth of a man in respect to this mortal life.

Seventhly, Nicodemus was yet unable, (through his prepossession of mind in favor of a temporal kingdom,) to comprehend the meaning of our Lord; and therefore says, *how can these things be:* as though he had said, the birth you speak of, as an indispensable condition to enter into the Kingdom of God, is that which neither I, nor any of my brethren the Jews, have discovered in the writings of the Prophets, wherein is foretold the coming of the Messiah, and his kingdom. That which from those Sacred Writings, we have understood concerning it, is this, that when he came, he

he would require of us no other conditions to enter into his kingdom than what are contained in the Law; and the Prophets.

Jesus answered and said unto him, *art thou a Master of Israel, and knowest not these things; i. e. the things I have been speaking to you concerning being born again.* Surely an unlearned Jew, who impartially attends to my doctrine, may easily understand what I say; how much more ought you, Nicodemus, a Ruler of the Jews, a Teacher of the Law to the people.

To illustrate and confirm the foregoing interpretation of our Lords words, I shall

First shew, that in the phrase, *born of the Spirit*, the word Spirit means the Gospel only; and therefore the phrase is of the same import with being born of the Word of God.

Secondly, that baptism, or being born of water, is in the Gospel dispensation, an indispensable condition to enter the Kingdom of God.

Thirdly, from the proof of the last particular, it will more directly appear, that to be born of water, is the same thing as being baptised with water, i. e. upon repentance or amendment of life.

To understand our Lords words, *born of the Spirit,--born again, or from above*, it ought to be particularly observed, that the sacred writers of the New Testament adopt a variety of figurative expressions by which they describe the unconverted state of mankind. Sometimes they describe their unconverted state by being dead, in darkness, &c. &c. And their converted state, sometimes by the natural birth; as in the passage under consideration; at other times, by a creation, or new creation, &c. &c.

These figurative expressions, are made use of relative to that moral, or religious change, which in the Gospel is invariably required as an indispensable condition to justification, or obtaining pardon of sin.

It is only the first figurative manner of speaking, which at present will be taken notice of in explaining our Lords words under consideration, namely, *born of the Spirit*.

And 1st, I observe, the Gospel or Word of God is called the seed of the new birth. Of this seed, persons are said to be begotten, and born again; 1 Peter i. 23, 25. *being born again, (as are the words of Christ) out of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible [seed] by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.* And this is the [incorruptible seed the] Word of God, which by the Gospel is preached unto you. James i. 18. *Of his [God's] own will begat he us with the Word of Truth, that we should be a kind (i. e. a peculiar spiritual kind) of first*

first fruits of his [spiritual] Creatures. Compare herewith Luke viii. 11, 16.

2dly, Hence such persons are said to be born of this seed; that is, the Word of God. For which see the passages just cited, and 1 John iii. 9.

3dly, As the Gospel, which is the seed of this new spiritual life, comes from God, persons are said to be begotten and born of him, and that he begat them, i. e. by the Word of Truth. 1 John v. 1, 18. James i. 18. Similar to which manner of expression, St. Paul tells the Christians at Corinth, *I have begotten you through the Gospel.* 1 Epist. iv. 15. See also Philemon v. 10. Gal. iv. 19.

4thly, As God is spoken of as begetting, persons they are said to be born of God. John i. 12, 13. *But as many as received him (i. e. Christ), to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name, which were born, not of the will of the flesh, (compare chap. iii. 6,) nor of the will of man, but of God.* 1 John v. 1, 18. ii. 29. iii. 9. iv. 7. Corinth. xv. 8.

5thly, Hence arises the appellation of babes, 1 Pet. ii. 21 on which account they are exhorted to feed on milk, (i. e. the Word of God) and to grow thereby. Ephes. iv. 13, 14, 15.

6thly, As persons are spoken of as begotten and born of God, hence arises his relation to them as their Father. John xx. 17. 1 Corinth. i. 3. Gal. i. 4.

7thly, Hence arises the appellation of children of God, i. e. sons and daughters, John i. 12, 13. Rom. ix. 26. 2 Cor. vii. 17, 18. Gal. iii. 26. Ephes. v. 1.

8thly, As Christ is the first begotten son of God, believers in him are called his *brethren*, Matth. xii. 47—50. Luke viii. 19—21. John xx. 17. Heb. ii. 11, 12, 17. Rom. viii. 29. Hence arises their spiritual relation one to another, as brethren; an appellation, often mentioned in the New Testament. Acts xv. 23. Ephes. vi. 23. Colos. i. 2.

9thly, As believers in Christ are called the children of God, and Christ is their elder brother, they are called *the house, and family of God*. Gal. ii. 10. Ephes. ii. 19. iii. 15. 1 Tim. iii. 5, 15. Heb. iii. 6. x. 21. 1 Pet. iv. 17.

10thly, From being children of God, arises their heirship, to what he has promised them in the Gospel. Rom. iv. 18. viii. 17. Gal. iii. 29. iv. 6, 7. Ephes. iii. 6. Tit. iii. 7. Heb. ii. 14. vi. 17. James ii. 5. 1 Pet. iii. 7.

11thly, They are intituled, first to justification from God, through Christ. Rom. iv. 13, &c. Gal. iii. 28, 29. Ephes. iii. 6. 1 Pet. iii. 7. Secondly, to glory—eternal life. Rom. viii. 17. Tit. iii. 7. Heb. ii. 14. vi. 17. James ii. 5.

The following passages (besides many others of a similar import)

import) I apprehend sufficiently explain the meaning of the expression, *born of the Spirit*; as it signifies the same thing as being converted by the Gospel; which is the seed, or generating principal of the spiritual birth. Therefore, from the fore-cited passages it may be inferred, first, that the phrase, *born of the spirit*, means being born of the Word of God, 2dly, That this new birth consists principally in unfeigned repentance, or a thorough change of mind and conduct. 3dly, That unless persons are born again, they are not properly qualified to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, i. e. the new covenant; and consequently to be born again, is an indispensable condition to enter into it.

That our Lord does not intend by the term Spirit, the Holy Spirit, I shall further shew from this consideration, namely, because neither the disciples of John the Baptist, nor those of our Lord, received the Holy Spirit, till after Christ's ascension. If from the New Testament this be made appear, it will follow, that to be born of the Spirit, in the ministry of John the Baptist, and that of our Lord's, is not to be understood of its inward operation on men's minds, but mediately by the Gospel.

That John the Baptist neither promised to give the Holy Spirit to any of his disciples, nor conferred it on any of them, is fairly inferred from the intire silence of all the New Testament writers.

Nay, his own words evidently imply this, when he says, *I indeed have baptized you [my disciples] with water [the only baptism I baptize with], but he [Christ] shall baptize you [whom I have baptized with water] with the Holy Ghost.*

The plain meaning of these words is this, that as certainly as John baptized with water, so Christ would baptize with the Holy Ghost; without mentioning, or even alluding to any particular time, when Christ would begin thus to baptize. This we learn from our Lord's words, Acts i. 4, 5. *And being assembled together with them [the apostles] commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence.* As though he said, John's prophecy concerning my baptizing with the Holy Ghost, shall in a few days begin to be fulfilled. Accordingly, it is said, chap. ii. 1-4. *And when the day of Pentecost (the time alluded to by Christ) was come, they (probably the hundred, and twenty) were all with one accord in one place; and suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting: and there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.*

These

These passages are plain proofs, that even the apostles themselves had not been baptized with the Holy Ghost during Christ's ministry; and which, with the context, evidently shew the time when the Baptist's prophecy concerning Christ's baptizing with the Holy Ghost began to be fulfilled. This is illustrated and confirmed by Peter's words, chap. xi. 16, 17. *And as I began to speak [to Cornelius, &c.] the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us [apostles] at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord [chap. i. 5.] how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, [on the day of Pentecost] ye also believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I that I could withstand God.* As though the apostle had said, this is another instance of John the Baptist's prophecy of Christ being fulfilled by him after his resurrection, like as on us, on the day of Pentecost; the Holy Ghost falling on them, as on us, without the laying on of hands.

That the expression, at the beginning, refers intirely on the day of Pentecost, appears indisputably plain for this reason, because on that day, and not before, the sacred writer relates the Holy Ghost fell on Peter and the other apostles; or in Peter's words, *God put no difference between us, [the apostles and Cornelius].*

That John the Baptist preached the Kingdom of Heaven, and many entered into it, seems undeniable from these passages: *The baptism of John, whence was it, from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, from heaven; he will say unto us, why did ye then not believe him, (i. e. why were ye not baptized of him). John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not; but the publicans and the harlots believed him. And ye, when ye had seen it, repeated not afterward, that ye might believe him.* Matth. xxi. 25, 32. Compare this with Luke vii. 29, 30. *And all the people heard him, (viz. John Baptist) and the publicans justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the pharisees and lawyers rejected the council of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.*

The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the Kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it, chap. xvi. 16.

But from the above-cited passages, containing the promise of the Spirit, it appears plain that they had not been born of the Spirit, i. e. by its inward operation on their minds, whereby they were led to obey the Gospel he preached; because it was not then given to any of his disciples in his ministry; consequently, being born of the Spirit, in that sense,

sense, was not a condition on which those who became John's disciples, entered into the Kingdom of Heaven. Our Lord's words therefore under consideration, viz. of being born of the Spirit, i. e. by its inward operation on the mind, are not applicable to the Kingdom of God which John preached: neither as it was preached by our Lord, as will be now showed.

That being born of the Spirit, i. e. by its inward operation on the mind, was not a condition of entering into the Kingdom of God, which was preached by our Lord during his ministry, I presume, will appear undeniable, from hence namely, because from the New Testament it is evident, the Holy Spirit was not given even to the apostles in Christ's ministry, who had entered into the Kingdom of God; much less does it appear it was given to any, whereby they were led to enter into that Kingdom.

That the Holy Spirit was not given even to the apostles, or any other of Christ's disciples, in his ministry, is to me undeniable from the forecited passages, and the following. John xiv. 16, 17, 26, I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, [i. e. one in my stead] that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not; neither knoweth him: but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, [by being in me] and shall [when I send him to you from the Father] be in you [i. e. dwell in you as he doth in me]. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance; whatsoever I have said unto you. Chap. xvi. 26, But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me. Chap. xvi. 7, 8, 13, 14. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you (i. e. to your receiving the Holy Spirit I now promise you) that I go away [to the Father, ver. 5]: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he [the Comforter] is come, he will reprove [by your ministry, &c.] the world of sin, &c.

Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak, and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and show it unto you.

If these particular and repeated promises of Christ to his apostles, to send them the Holy Spirit, do not prove it was not then given even to them, much less to his disciples, I cannot expect any illustration will force conviction.

However,

However, our Lord's words to his disciples, after his resurrection, are an additional proof to those just cited, that even the apostles had not received the Spirit, in his ministry, Luke xxiv. 49. *And behold, I send the promise of my Father [i. e. the Holy Spirit] upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high. And in Acts i. 4, 5, 8. He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but wait [there] for the promise, (i. e. the fulfilment of the promise) of the Father which, saith he, ye have heard of me, (vid. in the fore-cited passages in John). For John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence, (i. e. on the day of Pentecost). But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.*

Concerning these passages, containing the promises of the Spirit, it may be said, our Lord intended the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit only, such as were given the disciples on the day of Pentecost; and therefore it doth not follow that the Spirit, in its ordinary or common influences or gifts, was not given to the disciples of Christ in his ministry. To which I answer, when it is proved that this, namely, the Spirit, in its ordinary influences, is meant by our Lord in the above texts, it will be time to reply. At present, it appears to me as plain, and as determinate as words can well express it, that there is no such distinction intended; but that he spake only of sending the Holy Spirit, as it was given on the day of Pentecost, and afterwards to other believers.

To the foregoing passages, I may justly add what is recorded, John vii. 38, 39. *He that believeth on me (saith our Lord) as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water: but this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, (to those who believed on him, viz. his disciples) because that Jesus was not yet glorified. Or as our Lord expresses the same thing, chap. xvi. 7. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.* The above-cited words are an undeniable affirmative proof, that the Holy Spirit was not given to the disciples of Christ, in his ministry.

The fore-cited passage from John, chap. vii. contains these several things, first, that Christ spake in the foregoing verses concerning the Spirit, which those who believed in him should receive. 2dly, the apostle declares the Spirit was not yet (i. e. then) given to those who believed in Christ. 3dly, He assigns the reason why it was not yet given, namely, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.

That

That Christ was not glorified till after his resurrection, the following passages clearly evince, Acts ii. 33. *Therefore [Christ] being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost; he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.* Chap. iii. 13. *The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus.* See further, chap. v. 31. Ephes. i. 20, 21, 22. Heb. i. 3, 8.

St. John, in the above passage, having plainly declared that the Holy Spirit was not given to those that believed, till Christ was glorified; and it appearing he was not glorified till after his resurrection, it consequently follows, the Holy Spirit was not given to his disciples during his ministry.

To corroborate the plain meaning of the foregoing passages, and the observation on them, I would add what is related, Acts ii. 1—4. when, according to the foregoing promises Christ made to his disciples of sending them the Spirit, he (after he was glorified) poured it out on them on the day of Pentecost. *And when the day of Pentecost was fully come,—they (the apostles) were all filled with the Holy Ghost.* It is to this memorable time, that Peter applies the words of the prophet Joel; *but this (our having this day received the Holy Spirit) is that which was spoken of by the prophet Joel; and it shall come to pass in the last days (saith God) I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on my servants, and on my handmaidens, I will pour out in those days of my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.* Verse 33. the apostle saith, *Therefore (Christ) being at the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, (i. e. the power to give it, vid. John xvi. 5, 7.) he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.*

In the above passage is related, the first instance in the New Testament of Christ's giving the Holy Spirit, even to any of his disciples, or their receiving it; or, in John Baptist's words, baptizing with the Holy Ghost, and with fire. And therefore must needs add light and strength to the plain meaning of the foregoing passages, in proof that the Holy Spirit was not given in Christ's ministry; but after his resurrection, when he was glorified.

What will farther shew that the Holy Spirit was given to Christ's disciples after his resurrection, and not before, is, that then it was given not only to the apostles, but also to all believers; as may be seen, Acts v. 32. *We are his [Christ's] witnesses of these things, and so also is the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.* Chap. ii. 38, 39, viii. 12, 15, 16, 17. and many other passages in the Acts and Epistles.

One passage which I imagine may be urged against the proofs contained in the foregoing passages, that the Holy Spirit was not given to the disciples of Christ in his ministry, is Matth. x. 1, 8. *And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power (and authority, vid. Luke ix. 1.) against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness, and all manner of diseases.* See the parallel texts, Mark iii. 15. Luke ix. 1. The seventy disciples our Lord directs, saying, *Heal the sick; and when they were returned again with joy, they say, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name,* chap. x. 9. 17.

From these texts it may be urged, that seeing the apostles and the seventy disciples were impowered to heal the sick, &c. and it appearing from the New Testament, that such miracles were wrought by the Spirit of God, therefore it follows they received the Holy Spirit, by which they were to cast out devils, &c.

In answer to which, I observe, that to me, it appears the meaning of Christ's promise is this, that by a power or authority, which they were to receive from him, but not by their receiving the Holy Spirit, they should perform those miracles. And, therefore, the Seventy say, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. i. e. thy power or authority which attended us. That neither they, nor the apostles had received the Holy Spirit, when they were sent forth to preach, the foregoing passages, containing the promise of the Spirit, and its fulfillment, evidently declare; and likewise the reasons why Christ had not given the Spirit in his ministry; namely, because he was to go to the Father, and receive power to give it, before he sent it on them; or he was first to be glorified. See Ephes. iii. 8—11.

I may just observe, there is not the least mention made in the last-cited texts, that the apostles, or the seventy, received the Holy Spirit; only that they received power and authority to cast out devils, &c. If from the fore-cited promises, it is yet pleaded, that the apostles, &c. received the Holy Spirit, when they were sent to preach, it follows, either that it was with-drawn from them, after they fulfilled that ministration, or if it was not withdrawn, there is no reconciling the plain meaning of the above-cited promises of the Spirit, and the fulfillment of them on the apostles.

In the above interpretation of our Lord's words under consideration, I am countenanced by Lord Barrington, vid. *Miscellanea Sacra*, vol. i. page 94, 95. who says, "That healing and dispossessing were performed by the apostles and the seventy in our Saviour's life-time, according to
" the

" the commission he gave them, Matth. x. 8. Luke x. 9.
 " Mark vii. 7-14. by a power derived immediately from him
 " Luke x. 17. Matth. x. 1. but not by the power of the
 " Spirit; by which St. Paul afterwards says, he performed
 " mighty signs and wonders from Jerusalem to Iliricum,
 " Rom. xv. 19. St. John tells us, that the Holy Ghost
 " was not yet given, because that Jesus was not glorified,
 " John vii. 39. And our Saviour tells his disciples, that
 " if he did not go away, the Comforter, that is, the Holy
 " Ghost, would not come, chap. xvi. 7, xiv. 26. It was
 " after his resurrection, that he first breathed on them, and
 " said, receive ye the Holy Ghost, chap. xx. 22. and then
 " he did but prefigure it: he did not, nay he could not,
 " according to the settled order, then actually give it.
 " For he was to receive it of the Father, chap. xvi. 26.
 " and then shed it forth on his disciples, Acts ii. 33. and
 " was to ascend up on high, to give gifts unto men, Psal.
 " lxxviii. 18. Ephes. iv. 8-11. Though the disciples healed
 " diseases, or cast out devils; or wrought miracles by the
 " Spirit after Christ's ascension; and they are therefore
 " sometimes called gifts of the Spirit, 1 Coriath. xii. 4-10.
 " 28, 30. Gal. iii. 5. inasmuch as the faith of these was
 " then wrought by the Spirit; yet these being not peculiar
 " to the dispensation of the Spirit, but common to that
 " dispensation, with the ministry or dispensation of Christ,
 " in whose name they had been wrought before the giving
 " of the Spirit; they are not generally called the gifts and
 " distributions of the Spirit, or the Holy Ghost.

But supposing it should be proved, that the apostles and
 the seventy, when they were sent forth by Christ, received
 the Holy Spirit, whereby they worked miracles, it will not
 in the least follow that it was given to the disciples in general,
 or even to the apostles, or the seventy, whereby they were
 born again, or led to obey the Gospel.

Another text that may be urged against what has been
 offered to prove the Holy Spirit was not given to the disciples
 of Christ in his ministry, is Mat. x. 18, 19, 20. *And ye shall be
 brought before governors and kings for my name's sake, for a
 testimony against them and the Gentiles. But when they deliver
 you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak; for it shall
 be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak: for it is
 not ye that speak, but the spirit of your Father which speaketh in
 you.*

From these words it may be said, that this promise to the
 apostles was fulfilled in the ministration they were then sent
 upon, and therefore it follows, they received the Holy
 Spirit.

In answer to which I observe, that as there is no account they were at that time brought before governors, &c. there is no proof the promise was fulfilled to them; and consequently this text does not afford any clear evidence, they then received the Holy Spirit. That in this ministration the apostles were absent from Christ but a short time, is very plain from the evangelists; and therefore there seems little or no reason to conclude, they were brought before governors, &c. for it does not appear, that even our Lord himself had been brought before any of them, at that time. His discourse with the apostles, contained in the following part of this chapter, especially when compared with the other evangelists, is to me a plain proof, that his directions to them in that passage, wholly respects the time after Christ's resurrection. This is illustrated and confirmed by comparing the above text with Mark xiii. 9—11. *But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues, and ye shall be beaten; and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them. And the Gospel must be first preached among all nations. But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought before-hand what ye shall speak, neither do ye meditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost.* Compare herewith the parallel passages, Luke xii. 11, 12. xxi. 10—15. In the Acts of the Apostles are recorded, many instances of the treatment Christ told them in the above passages they would meet with, (i. e. after his resurrection) when, was fulfilled to them his promise, chap. iv. 1—20. v. 26—33. and of Stephen vi. 9—15. viii. throughout.

I will just add Dr. Whitby's note on Luke xi. 13. who says, "It must be granted that Christ speaks here, not of what they were to ask him at present, for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not glorified, John vii. 39. and so must we understand our Lord's words, Luke xii. 11, 12. for neither were they brought before Princes till after our Lord's resurrection and ascension, nor did the Holy Ghost instruct them how to speak till then. So our Lord's commission as to these words, Mat. x. 8. and all that follows in that chapter v. 16. to the end, plainly respects what they were to do, and suffer, after Christ's ascension."

The next passage which may be urged against what has been offered under the foregoing considerations, is Luke xi. 13. *If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?*

As these words do not contain any proof that the Holy Spirit was given to the disciples of Christ in his life-time, consequently,

consequently, they do not invalidate the foregoing proofs to the contrary. In the note just cited from Dr. Whitby, it is plain he judged, that the promise related to the time after Christ's ascension; and his opinion I presume, is confirmed from what has been advanced in these papers.

I may just observe, that this is the only text in the New Testament, wherein the disciples of Christ, are directed to pray to God for the Holy Spirit. The ordinary means by which they received it, was the apostles praying, and laying their hands on them after baptism, as Acts viii. 13—17. xix. 5. 6. And the extraordinary means, was Christ's pouring out the Spirit, without praying, &c. vid. ch. ii. 1—4. x. 44. 45.

Having proved that the Holy Spirit was not given, even to the apostles in Christ's ministry, it follows undeniably, that by the phrase, *born of the Spirit*, our Lord does not intend the inward operation of the Holy Spirit on the minds of men, but mediately by the Gospel; and therefore, to be born of the Spirit, (i. e. by its inward operation) is not an indispensable condition to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; seeing many had entered into it, both in the ministry of John the Baptist, and that of our Lord's, who had not received the Holy Spirit.

From the foregoing proofs, it appears therefore, that by the word *Spirit*, is to be understood the Word of God only, i. e. the Gospel revealed by the Spirit of God; and by the phrase, *born of the Spirit*, is intended, being born of the Word of God, or receiving the Word of God, whereby men become truly obedient to the Gospel.

Secondly, it was proposed, to shew that baptism, or being born of water, is an indispensable condition to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

The phrases, Kingdom of God, and Kingdom of Heaven, in the New Testament, are synonymous; and often signify the Gospel, or Word of God; in which sense I would be understood to use them. Also, that the doctrine preached by John the Baptist, is what Christ likewise preached: and therefore John preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, preached the Kingdom of Heaven.

In shewing what was above proposed, I shall state our Lord's judgment upon those two particular parts of the Gospel which John preached, viz. Repentance, and Baptism, from whence it will appear, he considered baptism as an indispensable condition to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, i. e. the Gospel Covenant.

The passages are Matth. xxi. 31. *Jesus saith unto them, [the chief priests with whom he was conversing] verily, I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the Kingdom of God*

God before you; for John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not; but the publicans and the harlots believed him [i. e. obeyed his Gospel]. And ye, when ye had seen it, [i. e. their obedience] repented not afterwards, that ye might believe him. What is meant by the publicans, &c. believing in John, by which they entered into the Kingdom of God, and the chief priests, &c. not believing him, whereby they had not entered into the Kingdom of God, will appear from these texts following, Luke iii. 12. *Then came the publicans to [John] to be baptised, and said unto him, Master, what must we do?*—He said unto them, *except ye repent, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of God.* or, as his words are in Matt. iii. 8. *Bring forth fruits meet for repentance.* Says Christ to the Jews, *The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of man? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, from heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him, i. e. Why then were ye not baptized of him.* That this is what they intend by believing in John, seems so undeniably evident from the text itself, as not to require, or hardly admit of any illustration.—The foregoing passages are illustrated by our Lord's words, Luke vii. 29, 30. *And all the people [of the Jews] heard him, [vid. John] and the publicans [and harlots] justified God, [i. e. accepted of his conditions of pardon, in order that they might enter into the Kingdom of God by] being baptized of John. But the Pharisees and Lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him, i. e. they refused to submit to those conditions, and enter into that Kingdom.* By comparing these passages it seems very evident, 1st, That repentance and baptism, by divine appointment, are conditions of entering into the Kingdom of God. This may be illustrated, 1st, Because our Lord declares plainly, that the publicans and harlots being obedient thereto, had gone or entered into that Kingdom. 2dly, From its appearing plain, that the only cause assigned by our Lord, why the chief priests, &c. had not likewise entered into it, was because they had not been obedient to those conditions.

2dly, From whence it seems indisputably to follow, as our Lord's judgment, that the baptism preached by John Baptist, is one indispensable condition to enter into the kingdom of heaven.

To corroborate the foregoing proofs that baptism is an indispensable condition of entering into the Kingdom of Heaven, I beg leave to offer some considerations on Acts x. 44—48. While Peter spake these words, (contained in the foregoing verses) the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed, were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the [uncircumcised] Gentiles also [as well as on the Jews] was poured out the gift

of

of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.

It may be proper here to premise, that from this chapter, and chap. xi. 1—18, 20. xv. 7—11. and other passages of the New Testament, it appears evident, that before God sent his angel to Cornelius, and revealed his will to Peter concerning him, as contained in the chapter under consideration, that the apostles did not receive the uncircumcised Gentiles into the Kingdom of God; and therefore preached to none but Jews, vid. chap. xi. 19. And this was also the opinion of other believing Jews, that the uncircumcised Gentiles should not be received into the Kingdom of God. Attending to this, will shew us the true foundation of Peter's question, referring to the objection his companions had, to Cornelius, &c. being baptized, when he said, can any man [i. e. you my companions] forbid water, that these should not be baptized, i. e. as well as we. He plainly gives them to understand, that as to himself, he was now convinced, from what God had shewn him, they ought to be admitted to that institution; and if they were likewise convinced of this, from what they had seen and heard, they ought not to object to it. Peter seeing they held their peace, commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.

I think it will on all hands be allowed, that the objection which Peter's companions had against Cornelius, &c. being baptized, referred to in his question, was, either they judged by their being baptized that they became profelites to the Jewish religion, without their being circumcised; or that by their being baptized, they entered into the Kingdom of God, i. e. the new covenant, as they themselves had. That Peter's companions did not object to Cornelius, &c. being baptized, believing, that thereby they would be initiated into the Jewish religion, is indisputably plain; because, the only initiating rite into it, is circumcision, and not baptism.

That their objection is founded upon the latter, seems plain, because even the apostle, as well as themselves, were of opinion, till now, that an uncircumcised Gentile ought not to be admitted into the Kingdom of God, as has been observed. To convince them, and especially the apostle, of their error in this particular, God sent his angel to Cornelius, and revealed his will by a vision, and by his Spirit, to Peter; as is recorded in the chapter under consideration, by which he was fully convinced of the purpose of the Almighty, as appears from his own words, ver. 34, 35. *Of a Truth I per-*

certa that God is no respecter of Persons: [in preferring the circumcised Jews, to the uncircumcised Gentiles, to the conditions of entering into the Kingdom of Heaven,] but in every nation, [whether he be Jew or Gentile] he that feareth him, and worketh Righteousness, [i. e. obeys the Gospel] is accepted with him. See chap. xi. 1—18. xv. 7, 8, 9. Accordingly, when Peter had rehearsed to his brethren at Jerusalem, as chap. xi. (who believed the uncircumcised Gentiles ought not to be received into the Kingdom of God,) the whole of what God had made known to him, which was confirmed by his giving Cornelius, &c. the Holy Ghost, it convinced them as well as the apostle, of the same truth, and they glorified God, saying, then hath God also to the [uncircumcised] Gentiles granted repentance unto Life, i. e. he hath received them by Baptism (as well as we Jews) into the Kingdom of God, or the Gospel Covenant.

That baptism is the initiating rite into the Kingdom of God, may be farther proved from hence, namely, because even after God had given Cornelius, &c. the Holy Ghost, Peter supposes the objection his companions had to the uncircumcised Gentiles being received into the Kingdom of God, might not be wholly removed, when he asked, Can any man, (i. e. any of you my brethren) forbid water, that these should not be baptized. Which objection, he would have known to be wholly removed, if they believed, that by their being baptized with the Holy Ghost, they thereby entered into the Kingdom of God.

Their being baptized with the Holy Ghost, therefore, both Peter and they believed did not initiate them into the Kingdom of God, but was designed (in this single instance of its being given before baptism) to remove the objection they had against Cornelius, &c. as uncircumcised Gentiles, and to engage them (with those other manifestations of the divine purpose) to receive them, by water baptism, into the Kingdom of God, without their being circumcised.

The foregoing observations I presume, will explain the true meaning of what St. Paul saith, Coloss. ii. 11, 12, and justify the present application of it. Ye (Gentiles) are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sin of the flesh: (i. e. your old man is crucified with Christ, and dead as Rom. vi. 2—11) by the circumcision of Christ. (Ye were thus circumcised, when ye were) buried with Christ by baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him, &c. The apostle's meaning is this; Circumcision was the initiating rite into the Old Covenant, or Dispensation of Moses, both which are abolished, as ver. 14. The initiating rite, appointed of God, in the New Covenant, or

or Gospel Dispensation, is baptism, whereby you Gentiles have been initiated into it; and thereby become the people of God, as the Jews under the Old Covenant, by being circumcised, were his people.

To corroborate the foregoing observations, shewing that baptism is the initiating rite into the Kingdom of God, I would offer to consideration what is recorded, Acts, ii. 38, 41, 44, 47. *Then Peter said unto them, (the convicted Jews) Repent, and be baptized every one of you. Then they that gladly received his word, were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And all that believed were together. The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.*

Of these Jews it is said, they that gladly received Peter's words were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them (i. e. the disciples of Christ, who by baptism had entered into the Kingdom of God, and who, ver. 47, are called the church) about three thousand souls.

From the context it appears, that the initiating rite by which these persons were added to the apostles, &c. or the church, as ver. 47, was baptism; and consequently that before they were baptized, they were not of the number of those, who believed, as ver. 44, or of the church, as v. 47. Baptism therefore is the initiating rite, whereby they were added to the church, or entered into the Kingdom of God.

If the foregoing observations are justly founded, it evidently follows, Peter and his companions judged that baptism (by divine appointment) is the initiating rite into the Kingdom of God; and consequently it is an indispensable condition to enter into it. And therefore if it be shewn, that by the expression, *born of water*, our Lord most probably intended being baptized with water, it will appear, that his judgment and that of the apostle Peter are the same.

Thirdly, from the proof of the foregoing particular, it will more directly appear, that to be born of water, is the same thing as being baptized with water, i. e. upon repentance or amendment of life.

I know of only two senses given of the term water, in the words under consideration; either, 1st, it signifies the Word of God, of which, in a spiritual sense, men may be said to be born again. Or, 2^{dly}, the word water, is to be understood literally.

If the first sense is that which is intended, then the expression, *born of the Spirit* and *born of water*, mean the same thing; because it hath been proved, that by the word *Spirit*, is meant the Word of God only. And then it would follow, that our Lord proposed to Nicodemus, only one indispensable

condition, whereby to enter into the Kingdom of God. But surely it is highly unreasonable to suppose our Lord expressed himself to improperly to Nicodemus, as that he might understand he intended two indispensable conditions, when he intended one only. Especially, if from the New Testament, it appears, that by the word *water* is meant water baptism.

For the present, I shall conclude, it is most probable the word is to be understood,

2dly, Literally, namely of water. If by it our Lord doth not intend water baptism, then he spake of another institution besides that, which as well as baptism, is an indispensable condition of entering into the Kingdom of God. But as the New Testament does not afford a probable proof of any other rite besides baptism being instituted to be administer'd by water, whereby to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, and it appearing from those Sacred Writings, that baptism is appointed for that as one end of its being instituted and observed, it follows, that by the term *water*, we are to understand baptism.

The expression, *born of water*, occurs only in the passage under consideration: but to be born, or born again, are expressions frequently adopted by the sacred writers; and I believe always denote that change of mind and conduct, expressed by repentance, or bringing forth fruits meet for amendment of life. As at baptism, therefore, a profession of repentance was made by those who were baptized, i. e. they confessed their past sins, and professed to live a new life; that institution is significantly expressive of that change; and therefore, by a lively and well-adapted figure, is called being born of water, or born again.

The following verses, I presume, clearly explain what is intended by the expression *born of water*. Rom. vi. 3, 4. *Know ye not that so many of us as have been baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

The unconverted state of these Christians is, by the apostle, figuratively described by sin, as a person having had dominion over them. But by a death to sin, they were released from that state; and buried in baptism, and out of the water (like as Christ out of the grave) they arose to newness of life, i. e. they now lived a new life, to another master, even Christ.

This spiritual translation, from a life of servitude to sin, by death, &c. to a life of obedience to Christ, describes the same change in their spiritual existence, as being born of water. For to arise to life from a death in sin, and to be born again, are expressions of the same import, in the language of the sacred writers. Compare Col. ii, 12, 13. Agreeable

Agreeable to the meaning of the above text, is that recorded of St. Paul, Acts xxii. 16. *And now, why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.* Compare chap. ix. 18. 1 Corinth. xv. 8.

In St. Paul's Epistle to Titus, he says, chap. iii. 5. *According to God's mercy be saved us, by the washing of regeneration.* The word *παλιγγενεσία*, *regeneration*, is compounded of *παλιν*, *again*, and *γενεσις*, *generation*; and here signifies a new spiritual generation. This seems plainly the meaning of the word, as it occurs Matth. xix. 28. *Ye which have followed me in the *παλιγγενεσία*, *regeneration*, i. e. in making (after a spiritual manner) a new generation.*—The plain meaning therefore of the apostles words seems to be this; that they being baptized upon repentance for the remission of sins, thereby in a spiritual sense became a new generation, or new creatures.

What it was they were saved from, is plain from the foregoing verses, namely, their sins. And therefore the same spiritual change is here intended by the apostle, as in the fore-cited text in Romans. — That by the washing of regeneration, is meant baptism, seems highly probable from the apostles adding, *and renewing*, i. e. giving the Holy Ghost. Because it was given at baptism, to every sincere believer.

Another passage which I apprehend illustrates the text under consideration, is Eph. v. 26. *Christ gave himself for the Church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water, by the word.*

To be sanctified and cleansed, in the sense of the apostle, I apprehend means, the obtaining the pardon and forgiveness of sins, upon embracing the Gospel by repentance, and being baptized into Jesus Christ. That no other washing besides baptism is intended, seems plain; because there is no other institution enjoined in the New Testament, to be administered by water, that has annexed to it the promise of the pardon and forgiveness of sins. The above sense of the words, is supported by the judgment of Mr. Locke, who says, "The purifying of men is ascribed so much throughout the whole New Testament to the Word, i. e. the preaching of the Gospel, and baptism, that there needs little said to prove it; see John x. 1. xvii. 17. 1 Pet. i. 22. Tit. iii. 5. Heb. x. 22. Col. ii. 12, 13. and as it is at large explained in the former part of the sixth chapter to the Romans."

If the foregoing interpretation of our Lord's words shall appear to be justly founded, it seems indisputably to follow,

1st. That by divine appointment, water baptism is made an indispensable condition of entering into the Kingdom of God, i. e. the Gospel Covenant. For our Lord expressly declares, that except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into it. Being born of water, therefore, is made as indispensable a condition thereto, as being born of the Spirit. Our Lord's peremptory manner of expressing himself therefore is such, as will not admit of dispensing with being born of water, any more than being born of the Spirit. If therefore it be admitted, that to be born of the Spirit is an indispensable condition of entering into the Kingdom of God, so must the being born of water likewise, and *vice versa*.

Our Lord has therefore evidently declared, that baptism is an indispensable condition of entering into the Kingdom of God; and consequently, it is the initiating rite into it. But then it should be particularly remembered, our Lord means only that baptism, which is instituted and enjoined by divine authority in the New Testament. This, I presume cannot be justly denied. If he is not understood to intend that institution only, we are at an utter uncertainty what rite he doth intend. And, therefore, any other rite, which may be practised by men, and called baptism, but not instituted by divine authority, it is not that rite, which he intended; and consequently, not an indispensable condition of entering into the Kingdom of God. This is evident, because God alone has authority to appoint what rite or institution is an indispensable condition thereto; and therefore a rite, which he has not even appointed, much less to be observed for that end, ought not to be practised, as an indispensable condition to enter into it.

The baptism enjoined of God in the New Testament, and which was administered by John the Baptist, and the ministers of Christ, is (as to the mode in administering it) described in the following words, *Jesus was baptized of John in the River of Jordan, and when he was baptized, he went up straight way out of the water.—Philip and the Eunuch went both down into the water, and he baptized him, and when they were come up out of the water, &c.—Ye are buried with Christ in baptism, and risen with him.*

The argument once urged by Christ to be baptized was, *thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.*

But further. From the foregoing explication of our Lord's words, it follows:

2^{dly}. That those who have not been born of water, as well as of the Spirit, have not entered into the Kingdom of God. This seems necessarily to follow, because our Lord has declared,

clared, that to be born of water, is as indispensable a condition thereto, as being born of the Spirit. But to be born of water, has been shewn, means to be baptised with water. But those who submit to another rite or institution, though called baptism, (if it is not enjoined of God in his Word, nor consequently no part of the Kingdom of God) cannot thereby enter into that Kingdom.

Thus sprinkling, if it be practised for baptism, and is not an institution of divine appointment, but only of human authority (which many eminent divines of the Church of England and others have fairly confessed) then those who submit to such a service, do not thereby enter into the Kingdom of God, i. e. the New Covenant; for this plain and decisive reason, namely, because there is not any other initiating rite into the Kingdom of God, but that which he has enjoined in the New Testament. And therefore, a mere human institution or appointment, cannot justifiably be made, either an indispensable condition to enter into it, or practised for that end.

3dly, From the foregoing interpretation of our Lord's words, *born of water*, there arises a very strong argument for the perpetual observation of baptism, under the New Covenant. Namely, because it is the initiating rite into the New Covenant; like as circumcision was the initiating rite into the Old Covenant. So long therefore as the New Covenant, or the Kingdom of God, continues in force, baptism ought to be observed by Christ's disciples, as the initiating rite into it; as circumcision was obligatory on the Jews, and observed by them, as the initiating rite into the Old Covenant, till that dispensation was abrogated. Had the Old Covenant not been abolished, and succeeded by the New One, circumcision would have remained obligatory on the Jews; but as that Covenant is abolished, and succeeded by the New One, that rite is no longer obligatory on them. So long therefore by parity of reason, as the New Covenant continues, the obligation to observe baptism must continue to be the only initiating rite into that Covenant or Kingdom of God.

F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

TITLE-PAGE, for *Initiating Right*, read *Initiating Rite*.

Page 6, Line 12, for *v. r. ver.*

ibid. ult. for *following*, *r. foregoing*.

7, 39, after *he*, add *had*.

14, 46, for *those*, *r. these*.

16, 20, for *so*, *r. so*.

ap dt y to

